

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A holder assembly comprising:

a holder housing adapted to receive a sample collection tube within a rearward end, a forward end of the holder housing including;

a needle receiving port for receiving a needle cannula therein and
an annular skirt extending about the needle receiving port; and

a safety shield pivotably attached to a collar, said collar having an opening therethrough for receiving a needle cannula therethrough, the collar being received between the annular skirt and the needle receiving port of the holder housing such that the safety shield is capable of being pivoted over at least a portion of a needle received within the needle receiving port of the holder housing,

wherein the safety shield and the collar are rotatable with respect to the holder housing about an axis of the holder housing, such that the safety shield and the collar can be radially rotated to a desired position around the axis without the axial movement of the collar along the axis.

2. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 1, wherein the collar is annular.

3. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 1, wherein the shield comprises a rearward end, a forward end, a longitudinal opening in the forward end for receiving a needle, and a hanger bar on the rearward end adapted to connect the safety shield to the collar.

4. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 3, wherein the collar comprises a hook arm, the hook arm engages the hanger bar for connecting the safety shield to the collar whereby there is an interface fit between the hanger bar and the hook arm.

5. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 1, wherein an outer surface of the collar includes a protrusion and an inner surface of the annular skirt includes a groove, the groove on the annular skirt adapted to receive the protrusion on the annular collar, thereby providing an interface fit when the collar is received between the annular skirt and the needle receiving port of the holder housing.

6. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 5, wherein the protrusion is annular and extends around the outer surface of the collar and the groove is annular and extends around the inner surface of the annular skirt.

7. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 4, wherein the annular skirt on the holder housing substantially encloses an open end of the hook arm, thereby preventing the interface fit between the hanger bar and the hook arm from releasing when the collar is received between the annular skirt and the needle receiving port of the holder housing.

8. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 1, wherein the collar has one or more slits defined in a rearward annular collar section thereof.

9. (Original) The holder assembly of claim 1, wherein the shield and the collar are integral and attached through a living hinge.

Claims 10 to 22 (Cancelled)

23. (Original) A holder assembly comprising:

a holder housing adapted to receive a sample collection tube within a rearward end, a forward end of the holder housing including a needle receiving port for receiving a needle cannula therein, the holder housing having an annular skirt extending from the forward end, and

a collar which attaches to the forward end of the holder housing, the collar having a hook arm for connection of a safety shield, wherein the annular skirt abuts the hook arm when the holder housing and the collar are in an attached position.

24. (Original) The holder assembly as claimed in claim 23, wherein the collar is rotatable about an axis of the holder housing.

25. (Original) The holder assembly as claimed in claim 23, wherein the collar further comprises an interior opening for receiving a needle cannula therein.

26. (Original) The holder assembly as claimed in claim 25, wherein the interior opening includes structure for engagement with corresponding mating structure on a needle cannula assembly.

Claims 27 to 38 (Cancelled)